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TITLE

Warpaint: body art as a tool for the alteration of perception in militar contexts (a case study in Herodotus)

KEYWORDS

Ancient Warfare; Body Art; Herodotus; Paint; Sensory Perception

ABSTRACT

Warfare is largely based on the senses and on psychomotor capabilities of those involved; soldiers and commanders need to be aware of their surroundings and of the enemy in order to fight. Any disruption which leads to alteration of perception can prove disastrous, and Ancient Warfare has numerous such cases. In Herodotus, the case study of the usage of whitewash by the Phocians against the Thessalians is a good example of the effect's deception can have in the perception of reality by an enemy army, leading them to lose their north and consequently lose the battle. In other words, deception is a key element in warfare, due to its ability to shift the state of mind of the enemy, causing them to become confused, and hence less proficient in their tasks.

In my communication, I intend to approach the topic of deception as a disruptor for the experience of battle, supporting my statements with evidence collected from the aforementioned battle between Phocians and Thessalians, recounted by Herodotus in his *Histories* (book 8, sections 27 and 28). Furthermore, I will also aim to provide an overview of the importance of perception as a whole in the topic of battle, and how perception (or the disruption of perception) contributes to the outcome of military episodes.